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HISTORY OF
FAIR ROSAMOND,
Otherwise ELEANOR CLIFFORD,
AND HER
ROYAL PARAMOUR,
Henry the Second,
KING OF ENGLAND.
With an affecting Account of her
Melancholy and Horrible Death,
At the Hands of the
INJURED QUEEN ELEANOR,
IN THE BOWER OF WOODSTOCK.

See Page 16.

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HISTORY OF
FAIR ROSAMOND, &c.

HENRY the Second was crowned king of England in the year 1154; he was an amorous man, though a great warrior, and took great delight in the conversation of the fair ladies with which his court abounded. The courtiers being very assiduous in humouring the inclinations of their Monarch, Henry frequently conversed with them on the subject of his amours; and once commending, with more than ordinary warmth, the charms of a lady whose company he had been in on the preceding evening, one of the courtiers, whom the king highly esteemed for his personal valour, thus replied—

"Your majesty, it must be allowed, is an excellent judge of beauty, and the lady whom you speak of is a charming and elegant woman. But I have a niece who as far surpasses her in beauty, as she excels the most ordinary women in your dominions. Her eyes sparkle like twin stars; her complexion outvies the lily, and her cheeks the rose. Her dimpled chin adds beauty to the rest, and makes her face a perfect oval; and her hands and arms excel, both in form and whiteness, the work of the finest painter or statuary; and no language can do justice to her majestic form and graceful mien."

The king's imagination being fired by this description, he eagerly enquired in what corner of the nation so great a beauty could be concealed from his view, and if he could not obtain an audience, that he might be

satisfied if her person equalled his account, or if the affections of her uncle did not blind him.

The nobleman, now perceiving his error and that the praises he had thought justly bestowed upon his niece might lead her to ruin, coolly replied, he had only made this relation to give a true definition of beauty and implored his majesty to pardon his presumption.

The king possessed too much penetration not to perceive the meaning of the courtier's answer. He grew exceedingly angry and commanded the nobleman, on his allegiance, to tell him the truth.

Being in fear of the king's displeasure he plainly answered, "My Liege, there is such a lady, daughter of Walter Lord Clifford, and of his lady, my sister, living in Godstowe, in Oxfordshire. Many noble persons have sought her in marriage, but have met a refusal; her tender heart not being yet disposed to love.

"And this I affirm is the truth, on the forfeiture of my head. As for the name of the fair creature, it is Rosamond; and indeed she is the peerless rose of the world." While they were thus discoursing, Queen Eleanor came to visit the king, which broke off any further conversation.

It was not long before the king resolved to invite himself to her father's house, and

to that end took a progreſs into Oxfordſhire, attended only by ſome truſty courtiers, and was highly welcomed by the Lord Clifford and his lady. Fearing his deſign, they ordered their daughter not to appear in his preſence; but the king bidding one of his attendants to enquire of the ſervants if ſhe was at home, and finding ſhe was, demanded to ſee her, vowing he would not dine till he had; ſo that all their excuſe of illneſs availed nothing. She was ordered to put on her beſt apparel, and come down, that ſhe might pay her duty to the king. Her bluſhes added to her beauty, ſo that at firſt ſight ſhe appeared in his eyes like an angel. He commanded ſhe ſhould ſit down, cauſing her to be placed directly oppoſite to him, on whoſe eyes he ſo long gazed, that he forgot oftentimes to eat.

The king having been entertained by Ld. Clifford for three days together, he had ſeveral opportunities to diſcourſe privately with the charming fair, whom he ſo much won upon with the preſents of fine jewels, and other coſtly things, that he raiſed an ambition in her tender breaſt, to glitter near a throne, though but in tinſel ſplendour. He alſo beſtowed his gold liberally on her tutoreſs. Having given ſtore of gold to the ſervants, he took leave of his miſtreſs, which he had no ſooner done, than he heard that troubles were again riſen in

his territories beyond the seas, which required his presence to allay and settle.

The king raising a gallant army, passed into France. The terror of his name so daunted his enemies, that they quickly fled, leaving the towns and castles they had surprised to his obedience. Yet, in the midst of war, his love prevailed, and made him write to Rosamond; and after she received it, it filled her with fears and irresolutions, not knowing how she should behave herself in a matter concerning her fame and chastity; but the glittering prospect of greatness and honour proceeding on the other hand, she resolved to shew it to her tutoress, who had not been negligent in soliciting her to accept the king's love and favour, expecting thereby advancement to herself, if she should be effectually instrumental in bringing it to pass.

She had no sooner read the letter, than she smiling said, "My dear child, you may see that all the happy constellations agree, so excellent a beauty must not be enjoyed by a mean person; you are made for a queen, and the yielding now to fortune promised is a large step towards a throne. Lay aside your blushes, and send him a comfortable answer. Let not too much modesty hinder you of being the mistress of so noble a king."

This made her blushes come and go, long

ſtruggling within herſelf, till at laſt this crafty matron uſed ſo many arguments, that ſhe returned the following anſwer :—

" Great Sire,—It is with no small astonishment I read a letter, subscribed with your royal name, and sent to me, as I suppose, by your hand. I am altogether ignorant of any such power in me, as to make a captive of a king ; but could not, I confess, read without pleasure, that my idea, as your Majesty is pleased to flatter me, should have an influence in making you a conqueror over your enemies. May it please your Majesty, I cannot but interest myself so much in your affairs, as to rejoice when you are victorious, and be glad of your success ; but as to my being placed in a glittering sphere, above the reach of those I dread, I neither understand it, nor dare I give myself the liberty of thinking what your Majesty's meaning may be ; but, as I know, I deserve no such promotion, neither do I desire it, so much as my own innocence : your Majesty's royal goodness is sufficient to keep me from any thing intended by it, that is incompatible with the strictest rules of honour and virtue. And therefore, praying for your Majesty's happiness, prosperity, and safe return, I beg leave, with the humblest submission, to subscribe myself,

" Your ever dutiful and most obedient subject,
" ROSAMOND."

The tutoreſs having got this letter from the innocent young lady, ſhe incloſed it in one written by herſelf to the king. The king was pleaſed with the letters, and made all the haſte he could to put an end to the affairs that kept him in Normandy.

Now, it happened that the Lady Clifford going into her daughter's cloſet, accidentally eſpied the king's letter to Roſamond ; at which, being extremely ſurpriſed as knowing nothing of what had paſſed between them, ſhe called her daughter to her, and asked what was the meaning of that letter ? Roſamond, as much ſurpriſed at that queſtion as her mother was at the let-

ter. knew not what to anſwer. Her mother taking her ſilence for an argument of her guilt, took the letter in her hand, and went immediately to Lord Clifford, who had a very tender love for Roſamond, and ſhewing him the letter, he was exceedingly diſturbed: and they went to their daughter's chamber, upbraiding her with being criminal with the king, and taking away the only comfort of their lives, who looked on her as their chief treasure. She kneeled down and ſolemnly proteſted ſhe was an unblemiſhed virgin, and that ſhe never had yet given herſelf up to the king's embraces. This letter, ſhe ſaid, was preſented to her by an unknown hand, as ſhe was going to chapel, not knowing it was from the king till ſhe had read it, which whilſt ſhe was doing the meſſenger withdrew. And now my honoured father, I deſire to know wherein I am criminal, unleſs it be in not acquainting you I had received the letter. Her father replied—"My only child, my dear Roſamond, the ſtaff and comfort of thy father's age, I am glad to find thou art innocent. What honour would it be to have ſaid, Roſamond is king Henry's concubine, and for unlawful love has loſt her virtue? The king's addreſſes to thee are the effects of luſt, and not of love. He has a queen to whom his love is due; and think what jealous rage will fill her breaſt

when she shall know you have robbed her of her king; for jealousy is hell to the mind, and a terror to the conscience, surpassing reason, and inciting rage. Think then what thou mayest expect in thy unlawful love. Thou wilt be sure to lose thy virtue and honour, thy chastity, thy reputation, perhaps thy life; and, which is most of all, thy soul, without repentance. If, therefore, thou wilt change thy virgin state, I will take care and get a husband for thee, with whom thou mayest live honestly; and that, perhaps, may quench the fire of lust thy beauty may have kindled in the king, and make thee safe, and thy parents happy."

Rosamond gave great attention to her father's words, assuring him, with many asseverations, she would do the utmost of her power to avoid what should be displeasing to him; but as to changing her condition, she did humbly beg to be excused.

Her mother thereon said—"Rosamond, it would be more to my satisfaction, and to your father's, to see you married, for then I could believe you out of danger; and you know, my Lord Fitzwalter has a passion for you; a nobleman of an illustrious family, as wealthy, too, as most lords in the kingdom; your father would be glad of such a son-in-law, and so should I, to see you well married; therefore do not stand in your own light, lest you thereby make us both believe you have too great a kindness for the king."

Rosamond said she hoped they would not put her upon courting my Lord Fitzwalter, however accomplished he might be; for it was enough for her to entertain him when he came to court her. Her father told her, as to that,

he would take care all things should be managed to her satisfaction.

But while the Lord Clifford and his lady were pleased with their designed proposal of their daughter, king Henry returned from Normandy, having concluded his business there, and made peace with France, and with his sons. This made Rosamond indifferent to the Lord Fitzwalter, who, by permission of her father, was at their mansion. She told him she had a greater kindness for him, than to expose him to the king's resentment; for she was sure whoever addressed her must suffer the king's anger. This was such a blow to the young lord as quickly cooled his love; for he had no mind to have the king for his rival. Before he went away he told Rosamond's father how he had been dismissed, who then perceiving there was no trusting to what she said, resolved to take another course and send her from impending ruin, though against her will; and to that end, in two days time, ordered a coach to be got ready, and every thing prepared for a long journey; and then calling for Alethea, Rosamond's false governess, of whom they had not the least mistrust, told her their thoughts of the king's love to Rosamond, and to what misery it would expose her, that she and Rosamond to-morrow morning must, with all privacy imaginable, depart from hence to Cornwall, unto a kinsman's there, near to Lancaston; there she may live in private undiscovered till the king's affections are diverted, or placed upon some other beauty."

The next morning Rosamond and her governess set out for Cornwall, and in a few days came to her kinsman's house, where they were

well received. King Henry having intelligence thereof, resolved to have her out of their hands, and thereupon sent for her uncle, and told him he had a piece of service to command of him, in which he would expect to be punctually obeyed. That nobleman told him, he hoped he would not question his allegiance nor the performance of his duty; and therefore humbly besought his majesty to let him know what service it was to do. "It is," said the king, "to go to Cornwall, where, at your kinsman's, near Lancaston, you will find your beauteous kinswoman, Rosamond. Present her with this jewel from me, and use your endeavours to bring her to my court without her parents' knowledge." Her uncle seemed startled at a command so far from what he expected, which, when the king observed, "O my lord," said he, "have I shocked you, then? Where is your allegiance now?"

"Here is my heart," replied her uncle, "where it has always been; of which your majesty shall soon be satisfied, by my obedience;" for he was loth the king should think that he was unwilling to obey him, lest he should incur his displeasure, and run the risk of having those great offices he held under the king taken from him. He set off to Cornwall, and found his kinswoman willing to accept his offer; and therefore, without more to do, provided for her journey a very noble chariot; and so, attended by her tutoress, and a few trusty servants, he brought her to court, and put her into those lodgings which the king had appointed for her reception.

Her uncle having acquainted the king that she was come, and how he had disposed of her,

he went that very night to pay her a visit. The monarch seeing that beauty in its first perfection, which was but blooming when he saw her last, was surprised with wonder and amazement. Rosamond fell on her knees, on which he raised her up with this exordium: "O fairest of creatures under heaven! kneel not to me, for thy excellent beauty commands all knees and hearts to bow to thee." Rosamond answered—"Under the frowns of my offended parents, I beg protection at your royal hand, and that within your court I may be free." The king extolled the beauty of Rosamond, and promised to protect her, for they might as well take the crown off his head as offer the least injury.

The discourse having passed, a short collation ensued, wherein the king shewed himself extremely pleased. After supper, the king told her, that in regard to the fatigues of her journey, he would give her no further disturbance that night, but would soon visit her again; and charging her uncle to have a particular regard to her, and see that she wanted nothing, he took leave of her. Alethea, her tutoress, was still with her, and did all she could to persuade her to yield to the king's embraces; but Rosamond seemed averse to it, what her father had said always running in her mind.

The king, who had two or three times visited Rosamond, began to be impatient of delay, and thought it was time to have some close conversation with her. And coming one evening to see her, he accosted her in these terms:—

"I have hitherto flattered myself, my sweet Rosamond, that you had an affection for me; but now I begin to find I was mistaken, for I now plainly see you have no regard for me."

"How," said Rosamond, "can your Majesty think I have no regard for my protector, in whose royal court I live here secretly? If I have been any way wanting in my duty, or given your Majesty just occasion for such ideas, pray let me know it, that I may better pay your Majesty the duty I owe; but notwithstanding what you have been pleased to say, I can hardly believe your Majesty thinks so."

"How is it possible," replied the king, "I can think otherwise, when I have been your captive, and yet you never go about to set me free? Have I not often told you that you had wounded me, and yet you never go about to apply that sovereign balm by which my wounds are only capable of being cured? And is not this next to a demonstration that you have no love for me?"

To this Rosamond, with blushes that rendered her still more beautiful, replied—

"Your Majesty is pleased to speak to me in figures; but I am a simple maid, and cannot understand you."

"Ah! Rosamond," said the king, "I know you understand me well enough; who is more blind than those that will not see? But since you force me to speak plainly, know it is your beauty that has wounded me; and it is your charms make me a captive. Love calls for love, nor can my wounds be cured without enjoyment: if, therefore, you have the great regard for me your words seem to intimate, shew that it is real, by admitting me to your embraces, and grant me the full fruition of your love."

Rosamond, extremely disordered at what the king said, was going to kneel down, but he would not suffer her, and said—

"Kneel not, dearest Rosamond; it is I that should kneel to thee—I only ask——"

Rosamond, interrupting him, said—

"Ask for my life, great sire, and you shall have it, or any thing that is in my power to give; but ask not for

my honour, that is so precious and valuable, I can never part with it but to a husband. My outward form is but a casket, virtue is the jewel, and when that is gone, what worth is the other?"

The king was surprised to hear such words from Rosamond, of whom he thought to make an easy conquest, and was as much in love with her virtue as he was with her beauty. But as he knew that stones, by continual dropping of the water, wear away, so he never doubted but, with repeated solicitations, he might at last overcome this stubborn beauty; and therefore to what she had said, he thus replied:—

"Kings, you know, have a peculiar prerogative, and move in spheres above the common rank; their privilege is to have many wives, when subjects are by law confined to one; and, therefore, though Eleanor be queen, yet Rosamond shall reign as well as she, and ever in my command as chief. We will be married first, my Rosamond, and then I hope you will not scruple."

"I know not, sire," said Rosamond, "whether it be a lawful thing to marry one that has a wife already: but if that can be proved, I have nothing to object, for I have no aversion to your person; nay, I have a value for you beyond others, both as a man, and much more as you are my king and sovereign."

The king made many promises to make her happy, if she had agreed to what he had proposed; and having left Rosamond, went to Alethea, and told her what repulses he had met with from Rosamond, instead of that enjoyment he expected. Alethea told the king, that if his majesty pleased to follow her humble advice, he should not enter into farther parlies with her, but that he should find a nearer way to the happiness he desired; for as to being married, it would be both a dilatory thing, and of no avail when it was done, as she intended

to inform Rosamond. " But what is the way, then, you would advise me to do?" said the king. " May it please your Majesty," said Alethea, " the way I would have you to take is this—that you should come into my chamber to morrow night, a little before bed-time, and I will leave you there alone till I have got my lady to bed: and as I lie with her, I will delay the time of my going to bed till she is asleep, and then I will bring your Majesty into the chamber, and you shall go to bed to her in my stead; and I doubt not but before the morning all her anger will be over, and for the future your admittance will be easy."

The king was pleased with the contrivance of Alethea; and, as a token, presented her with a diamond ring, and told her he would follow her advice, and be with her incognito the next night.

The next evening the king came according to promise, and Alethea went in to get Rosamond to bed, as she was wont to do; and in about an hour's time (which the king's impatience of delay made him think an age), she came back again to the king, and told him, that if he pleased to follow her, she would bring him up to Rosamond, who was in her bed and asleep.

The king needed no persuasions to follow her, but went immediately to her chamber, and there soon disrobed himself; and Alethea taking her leave of him, left him alone with Rosamond. The king having shut the door, and locked it after Alethea, went into bed to Rosamond, who was fast asleep, little dreaming of the treacherous part that Alethea played. The king, not willing to awake his charming

mistress, lay still; but she awaked of herself. And now the king thought it a proper time to speak to her, and let her know who it was that was her bed-fellow. It is not easy to imagine the surprise of Rosamond at this discovery, and she fain would have risen, but the king prevented her. When the morning appeared, the sun having awakened Rosamond, she was surprised to find herself in the king's arms, which summoned the blood into her face, and added fresh beauty to her charms. The king, to keep her spirits, said, "My dear Rosamond, as thou hast obliged me, doubt not but I will be true to thee." And hereupon sealing his promises with many kisses, he took his leave.

For a time these happy lovers often met, and enjoyed their love in private; but some court ladies to whom the king had been wont to shew the same kindness, finding themselves now neglected for this peerless beauty, being filled with revenge and indignation, did, by their secret whispers, soon spread about the king's familiarity with Rosamond.

Queen Eleanor being outrageous when she perceived that no kind words, nor intreaties mixed with threats, could wean the king's affections from his mistress, though he laboured all other ways he could to please and pacify her, set her engines at work to fright her from his arms, and for the safety of her life, to immure herself in a nunnery.

Fair Rosamond having found some of those letters that threatened her life, which were dropped on purpose for her to read, shewed them to the king, who made such strict enquiry concerning it, that some of those who had done it were discovered by the similarity of hands,

and severely punished; and many of the ladies who spoke detractingly and gave affront, were banished the court; insomuch, that perceiving the king was in earnest, and resolutely bent to defend his fair one, they gave over any further project of this nature.

To prevent violence, he appointed a guard to wait on her at home and abroad: and to remove her further from the queen's sight, that her envy and continual clamours, if possible, might cease, he caused a stately palace, called the delightful bower of Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, to be built at great cost, with all the cunning turnings and windings imaginable, far exceeding the Delian Labyrinth, which he appointed for her country retirement.

The bower had many entries and passages underground, into which the light came through narrow stone crevices, shaded with bushes, not perceivable to those that walked above, rising with doors in hills far distant, to escape from danger upon any timely notice, though the place should be even besieged and surrounded; and within were intricate mazes and windings, through long entries, rooms, and galleries, secured with an hundred and fifty doors.

To find the way out of and into the most remote apartments, the skilful artist had left a clue of silver thread, without the guidance of which it was an impossibility to be done. About this bower were curious gardens, fountains, and a wilderness, with all manner of delights for pleasant situation and recreation, to furnish it as another earthly paradise for so fair a creature to inhabit; and there the king often resorted to see his beloved Rosamond.

But this more enraged the queen: not only

that she should have so famous a palace built on purpose for her, but that the king staid whole weeks on his visits, and another enjoyed the embraces she expected; wherefore she consulted with her sons, grown men, how to be revenged; and after many things argued and considered, it was agreed amongst them, that prince Richard, afterwards king of England, should go over and join the French, to raise war against his father in Normandy, then belonging to the crown of England, which, whilst he effected, speedily would withdraw the king to aid his subjects, and subdue his enemies; and leaving his fair mistress behind him, and Rosamond being destitute of her chief defence, might be open to their plots and contrivances against her life, which, while he was present, would be frustrated. Nor was Prince Richard slow in this, but made a fierce war, beat the king's lieutenant, and took many towns, which news coming to the king's ear, roused him like a lion from his den, and filled him with princely resolution of revenge. It is true, indeed, the different passions of revenge and love long struggled in his breast; but love at last gave way to honour, vowing his love should make his revenge more sharp; and therefore he resolved to go with a well-disciplined army.

The king, firm to his resolves, being just ready to depart for Normandy, went, last of all, to take his leave of Rosamond, and to assure her of his love and kindness. The king came in, and found her on the floor, in the utmost grief, sighing such breaths of sorrow, that her lips which late appeared like buds, were now overblown. It would have raised the pity of a marble breast to see the tears force through

her lovely eyes, and lodge themselves on her red murmuring lips, which, after a small respite, said—"Ah! dearest Prince! how cruel is unkind fortune unto lovers, that we must so soon part; and my presaging soul forebodes, never to meet again in this world, if now you leave me to the irreconcileable hatred of my merciless enemy, quite void of your royal shelter and protection. O, for this did I resign myself into your arms, and give up my virgin innocence and unspotted treasure to your pleasure! O, is there no English general trusty and valiant enough to defeat and scourge your rebels, but must you be separated from your faithful, constant Rosamond, and venture your precious life, which is now dearer to me than my own?"

She would have proceeded, but sorrow for a time stopped the utterance of her voice; and she had fallen to the ground, had not the king caught her in his arms, tenderly embracing her, and kissing her wan and faded cheeks and lips a thousand times: then setting her down by him, he said—"Fairest of creatures, afflict me not thus with thy tears! Dearest Rosamond, at my entreaty let them cease to flow, and let not sorrow impair thy lovely beauties! I will wear them on my heart, nor shall the rude alarms of war drive thy image thence."

To this Rosamond, with her tears still flowing, and her snowy arms cast about his neck, replied—"And why may I not go with my much loved lord? I'll dress like a page, and wait on you in all your dangers; and when in the heat of battle your life is in danger by the threatening sword or spear, I will boldly step between, and, by receiving the wounds that

threaten you, guard your life with the loss of my own. O take me with you for there is no such safety for me as in your royal camp; but wanting you, my life is death"

She would have proceeded, but the king interrupting her, said—"My fairest Rose, you are not fit to brook the toils of war; ladies cannot endure the fatigues and hardships of war: soft peace and delightful pleasures are most agreeable to their tempers; therefore you must stay in England's peaceful soil till I return." Then calling to Sir Thomas, her uncle, the trusty knight, who had first given him the account of her beauty, he said—"Here, worthy knight, I commit this inestimable treasure, far more valuable than a kingdom. Take to you a strong guard for a defence, and be careful, I charge you, as you tender your life, that none be permitted to see her till my return: and expect my fair mistress, I shall often write to you, and require your answers"

"Alas!" said she, "this parting is worse than death; and I am afraid my death will be the fatal issue of it. I am sure the soul and body cannot part with so great pains as I now part with you. Fain would I speak the last farewell, but I cannot, there are so many deaths in

that hard word. Go, royal sire, that I may know my grief; for grief is but guessed while thou art by: but I too soon shall know what absence is; it is the sun's parting from the frozen north, whilst I stand looking on some icy cliff, to watch the last low circles that he makes, till he sinks down from heaven!

"Ah, Rosamond!" replied the king to her, "methinks there is much mournful sweetness in parting, that I could hang for ever on thy arms, and look away my life into thy eyes; but I must hasten" "And so must I," said Rosamond, "if death be far; for this is the stage to which I am going; from whence I never, never shall return!"

The disconsolate Rosamond gave herself up to sorrow and melancholy, refusing to be comforted for some weeks; and when she slumbered, she started, crying out, "O save me! save me! here is the queen, she has got at me at last!" and with the fright awaked, terrified with her dreams. Nor was it without reason that Rosamond was thus afflicted in her mind, for all this while Queen Eleanor was plotting her destruction; which to effect, she engaged some favourites, whom she had raised to high promotion, to stand by her in case of danger.

It being summer time, she undertook

an excursion, as she gave out, for her health; appointing at a set time her conspirators to hide themselves in a cave near the bower, she hid herself in a grove, and sent one of her pages, dressed as a post-boy, to deliver a letter to Sir Thomas, the keeper of the bower, and into no other hand, and when he had delivered it, immediately to blow his horn.

The cunning device took, and Sir Thomas was immediately slain by those in ambush. The gates being seized by the party, the queen came to the palace, and getting the silver clue, she entered the bower, causing all the servants she found to be slain; and in the furthermost retirement, in a chamber gilded, she found Rosamond, the object of her hate, all dazzling in robes of silver, adorned with gems, shining like an angel, at which sight she some time stood amazed, and began to melt in pity; but jealousy soon reviving the flame of fury, with a stern countenance she said, "Have I found thee, thou graceless wretch, who hast shamefully taken away my husband from me. Come, lay aside your gaudy trappings, and receive the reward due to your crimes.

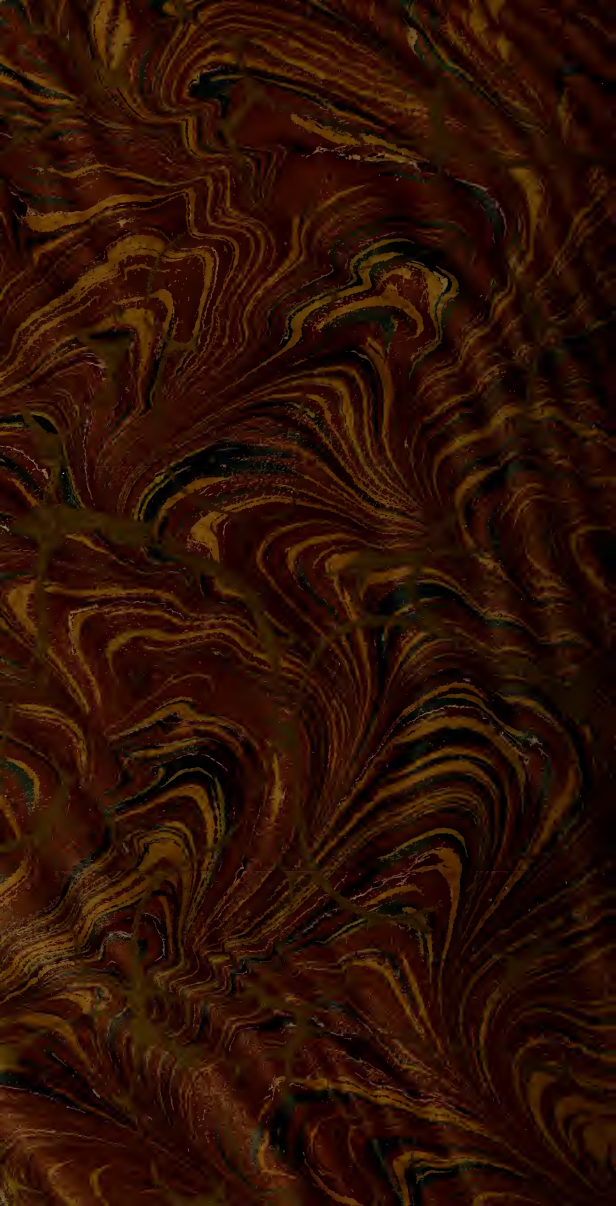
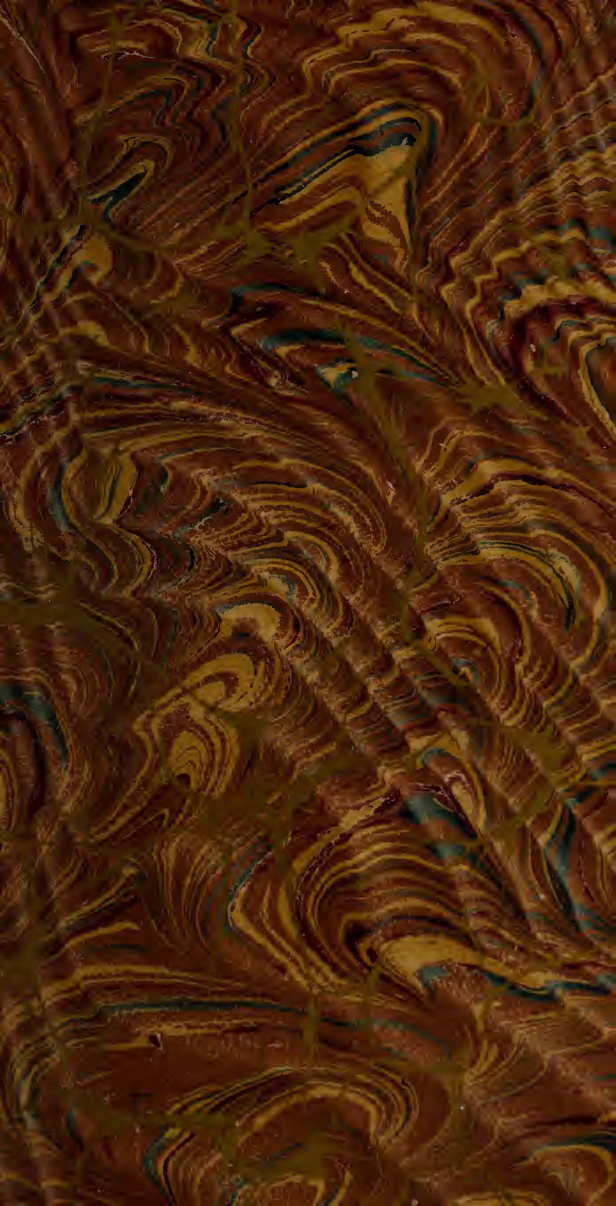
Rosamond seeing the angry queen before her, and hearing these dire words, trembled from head to foot. She fell on her knees, imploring mercy and pardon

for her offences, with a flood of tears, begging she would have pity on her tender years, and she would immediately immure herself in a nunnery, and see the king no more, or else abjure the land; and if she had not deserved to live, yet she humbly besought her in mercy and tender compassion to the infant that struggled in her womb, that she might live, though in a dungeon, till she was delivered, and then she would willingly submit to die, so that the child might be saved alive.

This last request the more incensed the jealous queen; for, hearing she was with child, her fury broke forth beyond all moderation, when snatching up a golden bowl, which stood on the table, she poured a draught of deadly poison into it, which she had brought with her, commanding her to drink it up immediately; at this she trembled, and begged mercy with tears, when the queen pulled out a dagger, and held it to her breast, saying, "If you cannot relish poison, see here is steel to rid you of the world." The sorrowful lady perceiving there was no remedy, but she must die, stood upon her feet, and with many tears, and piteously wringing her hands, intreated mercy of God for her youthful sins and failings, desiring that all beauties might be

warned by her sad fall, not to be proud and aspiring, but contented with a safe condition; and, often calling for mercy, she, with a trembling hand, put the bowl to her mouth, and drank the poison, which soon put an end to her life. The queen caused the body to be buried privately with the rest that were slain, and so departed.

Not long after the death of Fair Rosamond, the king, who had many strange dreams concerning her, returned home victorious; but hearing of her tragical end, his joy turned into mourning, and in distraction he rent his royal robe, shut himself up in his chamber, and suffered none to speak to him for many days.

When the king had a little eased his grief, he summoned his judges, and commanded them to make a strict enquiry after those that were guilty of these heinous crimes. They, fearing his displeasure, were so diligent therein, that most of them were apprehended, tried, and put to the most cruel deaths, who, in their tortures, accused the queen, who was not able to bear out herself, for so fierce was the king's indignation, that the tears and intercession of the nobles on her behalf were of no avail; but, being a foreign princess, her life was spared; yet the king not only renounced her, but confined her for her life-time to a strict imprisonment; and commanded, if she died there, her body should not be buried, but there to moulder to dust; nor would he forgive her at his death. Rosamond, both in her life-time and at her death, was a benefactress to the abbey of Godstowe, where she desired to be buried, with which dying request of one so dear to them in her life, the nuns readily complied. This happened in the year 1177, and 24th of the reign of Henry II.

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